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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3528  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2914  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP

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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN AND SCA/PPD

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SUBJECT: Kyrgyzstan: Media Reaction to Anti-Transit Center Press Conference

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY: On July 20, 2009, a group of activists who oppose the Transit Center at Manas International Airport held a press conference to express their discontent. Press conference participants included the Chairman of the Coordination Council for an organization that calls itself "For the Withdrawal of the American Airbase," Aleksey Tiperov; the widow of the truck driver who was killed at Manas Air Base in 2006, Marina Ivanova; and the widow's attorney, Galina Skipkina. The press conference received limited media coverage. Most notable was that the widow's anger was mostly directed at the Government of Kyrgyzstan rather than at the United States. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) AKIpress Information Agency, where the press conference took place, reported that Tiperov demanded the Transit Center be withdrawn from Kyrgyz territory. According to him, the only new point in the Transit Center agreement concerned the Transit Center's environmental impact. He was particularly outspoken about the "diplomatic immunity" of the Transit Center's American personnel. Tiperov accused the Government of lying to its own people and to Russian President Medvedev. He said that all foreign bases, including Russian, should leave the country to maintain Kyrgyzstan's sovereignty. To achieve these goals, Tiperov intends to hold a number of public protests and initiate a bill "On Foreign Citizens' Status."

13. (SBU) According to AKIpress, Marina Ivanova, the truck driver's widow, said that the Kyrgyz Government cannot ensure the safety of its people. She complained that the investigation of her husband's death has taken two and a half years with no result. AKIpress also reported that, according to MP Alisher Mamasaliev, Foreign Minister Sarbayev reported to the Parliament that the government is monitoring the investigation, which is close to its end and will go to court by the end of 2009.

14. (SBU) Internet news agency 24.kg quoted Tiperov as saying that the American military presence in Kyrgyzstan could drag the country into the conflict in Afghanistan or put Kyrgyzstan at risk for terrorist attacks. According to 24.kg, Marina Ivanova said that the [American] courts dragged the shooting case out until Manas Base was closed (Note: Though she did not say this expressly, she implied

that the closing of Manas Air Base was intended to avoid legal action for the death of her husband. End note.) Ivanova's lawyer, Galina Skripkina, said that Aleksandr Ivanov's death became a playing card in the Kyrgyz officials' game.

15. (SBU) RFE/RL Kyrgyz-language broadcast, Radio Azattyk, aired Ivanova saying, "Why should we vote for a president who cannot protect his people?"